



Shelter-in-Place

Chemical agents are poisonous gases, liquids, or solids that have toxic effects on people, animals and plants. Most chemical agents cause serious injuries or death. Severity of injury depends on the type and amount of the chemical agent used, and the duration of exposure

If a chemical agent attack were to occur, authorities would instruct people to either **“shelter in place”** (seek shelter where they are and seal the premises), or evacuate immediately. If the order is to “shelter-in-place” in your home, office or school, you will need to follow these directions:



☐ Stay inside.



☐ Close all windows and doors.



☐ Turn off ventilation systems (heating and air-conditioning, fireplace dampers, etc.)



☐ Go into a room with the fewest doors and windows and seal the



☐ Stay in the room until told by the authorities that it is safe to come out.

How to seal a room when sheltering in place:

- Dampen towels and place over the crack under the door.
- Cut plastic sheeting to fit over the windows and vents. Secure the plastic with duct tape.
- Tape around the door.
- Turn on the radio.
- Don't ventilate (air out) or leave your sealed shelter until you are told to do so.

If ordered to evacuate:

- If ordered to evacuate, do so immediately and carefully follow directions. Do not wander about; know where you are going and how to get there.
- Avoiding chemical exposure should be your primary goal. Leaving your sheltered area to rescue or assist victims can be a deadly decision.
- In a chemical emergency, there is very little an untrained volunteer can do to help victims. Stay in your sheltered area until authorities determine it is safe to come out.
- If you were outside before taking shelter and think you may have been exposed to a chemical agent, there are several things you can do. If you are in a sealed shelter, take off at least your outer clothes, put them in a plastic bag and seal the bag.
- If water is available, wash or take a cool to warm (not hot) shower, using lots of soap and water. Do not put the soap in your eyes, just lots of water. If you leave the area, tell emergency responders or medical staff at your destination you may have been exposed. Tell the emergency responders about the sealed bag so that they can arrange for its safe removal after the emergency.
- If you have symptoms of exposure, call 9-1-1 immediately and follow their instructions.



**WASHINGTON
MILITARY
DEPARTMENT**

Emergency Management Division
Camp Murray, WA 98430-5122

Web site: www.emd.wa.gov
253-512-7000; (800) 562-6108



PO Box 47890
Olympia, WA 98504-7890

Web site: www.doh.wa.gov
360-236-4027; (800) 525-0127



Seattle Office of
Emergency Management

2320 4th Ave
Seattle, WA 98121-1718
206-233-5076
206-684-5998 (fax)